

FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE

To publish NAVMC 2918, "Key Volunteer Network - Key Volunteer's Guide."

2. INFORMATION

a. This Guide is a parallel product coincident to Marine Corps Order 1754.2A, "Marine Corps Key Volunteer Network."

b. NAVMC 2918 is one of four guides that provide detailed guidelines for the Key Volunteer Network. NAVMC 2918 amplifies and reinforces, but does not amend, MCO 1754.2A; if a conflict arises, the MCO shall take precedence.

c. Initial distribution of this Guide will be made per the current edition of MCO P5600.31.

3. RESERVE APPLICABILITY

This Guide is applicable to the Marine Corps Reserve.

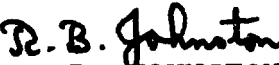
4. RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Recommendations for improving this Guide are invited and should be submitted in writing to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (MHF).

b. Unit commanders are encouraged to maintain sufficient quantities of this Guide on hand to provide each Key Volunteer an individual copy.

5. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

  
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Deputy Chief of Staff for  
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Subj: NAVMC 2918, "KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK - KEY VOLUNTEER'S  
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KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK

KEY VOLUNTEER'S GUIDE

RECORD OF CHANGES

Log completed change action as indicated.

Change Number	Date of Change	Date Received	Date Entered	Signature of Person Entering Change



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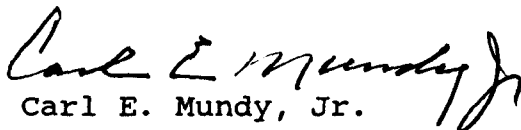
**LETTER FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS  
AND MRS. CARL E. MUNDY, JR.**

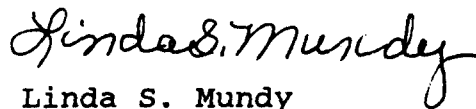
The book you hold in your hand is a real treasure--and a first for the Marine Corps. It's the result of long hours of work by a large number of volunteers who had only the good of Marines and their families in mind. They asked for nothing in return except knowing that the Corps would be better served when they finished their labors than when they began.

The Key Wives Working Group in July 1992 was a gathering of people from all communities of the Marine Corps. They debated, discussed and decided how best to bring together the finest elements of many outstanding programs into one standard Key Volunteer Network for the whole Corps. They did this, but also left room for unique circumstances in different localities, for Marines on independent duty and in our Total Force Reserve Structure. What emerged from this conference was a diamond in the rough.

Since then, guides for the Commanding Officer, the Key Volunteer Coordinator, the Key Volunteers and a Training Guide have been written and edited several times. Working copies were sent to members of the Steering Committee and the Working Group for their comments. You now have the cut and polished diamond--your tool for the future.

The deepest gratitude and heartfelt thanks of all of us in the Corps go to the participants in the Working Group, and especially to the members of the Steering Committee: Bettie Cooper, Zandi Krulak, Janel Howell, and Jeanne Overstreet. Bravo Zulu also to the guide editors: Brenda McAleer, Trink Howe and Joan Lorenz, and to the earliest pioneers of this program, Shirley Smith and Phyllis Price. Gratitude is due for the support of Colonel A. A. Quebodeaux, former Director of the Human Resources Division of Manpower and Reserve Affairs Department, Dr. David L. Smith, Deputy Director of the Human Resources Division, Judy Hampton, Head, Family Programs Branch and Captain Mark L. Ward, Administrative Officer, Family Programs Branch. Without the specific and selfless contribution of each member of the Working Group, this monumental undertaking would never have been completed. Each of them deserve to be extremely proud. The Marine Corps will benefit for years to come from what they accomplished and have contributed.

  
Carl E. Mundy, Jr.

  
Linda S. Mundy

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## **PREFACE**

This guide is one of several resource documents developed by the Key Wives Working Group, which met in July 1992 under the auspices of Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Human Resources Division. A list of the membership of the Working Group which represented a cross section of the Marine Corps, is provided on the following pages.

The major task of the Working Group was to design and outline the documents required to support the Key Volunteer Network throughout the Marine Corps. The task was accomplished with great enthusiasm and creativity.

The accomplishments of the Working Group will have a far reaching impact. Marines and Marine families everywhere, now and in the future, will benefit from the outstanding contributions made by these pioneers in the Key Volunteer Network.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK PROGRAM GUIDES**

This is the *Key Volunteer's Guide*, the primary reference document for Key Volunteers. Section I of this Guide provides a brief overview of the history of the program. Section II describes the major roles and responsibilities of personnel associated with the Key Volunteer Network.

A set of guidelines and forms to help the Key Volunteer is contained in Section III. Section IV outlines routine activities, issues, and/or challenges that Key Volunteers will encounter

Operational events such as deployments, separation, and mobilization are covered in Section V.

As a representative of the unit, the Key Volunteer should have a basic understanding of such matters as confidentiality and fund raising. These issues are addressed in Section VI.

Section VII provides advice on managing the stress that may be encountered by Key Volunteers, and provides suggestions for preventing "burnout."

Key Volunteers associated with reserve units should be aware of the unique issues and structure of the reserve force which are covered in Section VIII.

In addition to this Guide other materials developed in support of the Key Volunteer Network include the following:

*Commanding Officer's Guide*

*Key Volunteer Coordinator's Guide*

*Key Volunteer Network Training Guide*

Throughout the guides, the Key Volunteer Network is described as assisting Marines and their families with family readiness issues. Included in Marine units are other military personnel, such as Navy chaplains, corpsmen, foreign exchange personnel, etc. When attached to a Marine unit these service members and their families are part of the Marine family and a vital part of the Network.

## **SECTION I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Family Readiness Support Program, established by Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1754.1, directs the coordination of agencies, programs, services and individuals united to assist each Marine and Marine family as part of the Marine Corps' force in readiness. In conjunction with the Family Readiness Support Program, the Key Wives Network was established by MCO 1754.2 in 1991, and subsequently renamed the Key Volunteer Network. MCO 1754.2A gives basic guidance for the funding, training and administration of Key Volunteer Network activities.

Together, these Orders provide policy and procedures for the establishment of comprehensive family support systems for all Marines, active duty and reserve, serving in deploying or non-deploying units. The intent of these support systems is to prevent family stress by providing a healthy community environment that will allow Marines to focus on their mission and be confident that their families are supported in times of need.

In White Letter No. 16-92, the Commandant of the Marine Corps expressed his strong support of the original Key Wives Program. Now known as Key Volunteers, these Marine Corps spouses are organized into a Key Volunteer Network with the mission of supporting families by helping them to solve problems that may affect unit readiness. The Network provides a personal link between family members, the unit command, and community support organizations.

The Key Volunteer Network, while standardized in format throughout the Marine Corps, is still flexible enough to allow each unit to adapt the program to meet unique unit needs and demonstrate the fact that families are an integral part of the Marine Corps.

## **SECTION II**

### **THE KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK STRUCTURE**

#### **A. OVERVIEW**

The structure of the Marine Corps Key Volunteer Network is outlined in MCO 1754.2A. Each unit maintains a copy of this Order

The Order directs that each unit throughout the Marine Corps, from battalion/squadron level and above appoint a Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteers to assist in implementing a Family Readiness Program. The Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteers work with the unit's Commanding Officer (CO) and Family Readiness Officer (FRO) to provide information, support and referral assistance as needed to Marines and Marine Corps family members.

Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers are assigned at the applicable unit level of the reserve component.

To support the Key Volunteer Network, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps has developed a required training package, distributed program guides and training materials, and supplied start-up equipment. HQMC monitors volunteer programs through the Human Resources Division of the Manpower and Reserve Affairs Department.

At HQMC, a Key Volunteer Network Coordinator, who is appointed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, represents the Network in policy considerations and coordinates information flow. As an experienced Key Volunteer Coordinator, this Volunteer Coordinator serves as a liaison between the Key Volunteer in the field and HQMC.

#### **B. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Guidance regarding roles and responsibilities for the Key Volunteer Network Program is provided in MCO 1754.2A.

##### **1. The CO.**

The Key Volunteer Network is the CO's program. The CO is responsible for establishing a Key Volunteer Network that meets the unique needs of the unit. Among the CO's duties are to:

- \* Select and appoint a Key Volunteer Coordinator from those qualified and interested spouses of members of the command who apply or are recommended for the position based on their experience and willingness to participate.

- \* Appoint the Key Volunteers.
- \* Issue an official letter, appointing the Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteers, which contains specific duties and limitations (such as Privacy Act and confidentiality requirements) and providing appropriate references such as the Marine Corps Orders 1754.1 and 1754.2A. The appointment documents include a Statement of Understanding which defines the legal basis for the volunteer service to the Marine Corps.
- \* Provide unit specific direction to prepare Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers for their assignments.
- \* Provide information regarding and encouraging attendance at training provided for Key Volunteers.
- \* Determine a budget for appropriated funds, and/or non-appropriated funds (if available in the unit) or other funding sources such as donations to the Key Volunteer Network.
- \* Provide administrative support, use of official mail, and reimbursement for incidental expenses such as mileage and child care under pre-agreed circumstances.
- \* Provide work space, if necessary, and administrative needs -- paper, pencils, answering machine, etc.
- \* Promote understanding and visibility of the Key Volunteer Network within the unit.

## 2. The FRO.

The FRO is an active duty member of the unit who serves as the direct link between the Key Volunteer Network and the CO. Selected by the CO to oversee unit family readiness for Marines and their families, the FRO's responsibilities vary with each unit as determined by the CO. Some typical duties include:

- \* Serve as the military POC, for routine matters, between the unit and members of the Key Volunteer Network. This is especially important during deployments.
- \* Work with the Key Volunteer Coordinator regarding family readiness matters.
- \* Assist in providing administrative and logistical support for the unit's Key Volunteer Network.
- \* Educate Marines in the unit on family readiness responsibilities.

- \* Maintain contact with the Director of the Family Service Center (FSC) or the Family Readiness Support Program Coordinator, and become thoroughly familiar with the FSC's programs, training, and services.
- \* Provide liaison for the Key Volunteer Network with other military organizations, e.g., the disbursing office, the base post office, etc.
- \* Maintain a consolidated unit family readiness roster, including names, addresses, and phone numbers of family members, and periodically provide an updated roster to the Key Volunteer Coordinator.
- \* Maintain a current roster of all Key Volunteers in the unit. Provide a copy of the current roster to the FSC on a quarterly, or more frequent basis, as needed.
- \* When assigned as the FRO at the regimental/group level or higher, serve on the installation's Family Readiness Support Council.
- \* Perform other duties as determined by the CO.

### 3. The Key Volunteer Network Advisor (Optional).

The Advisors to the unit's Key Volunteer Network serve at the request of the CO, and may be the spouses of the CO and the senior SNCO, or the spouses of other senior members of the unit. Although they may vary with each unit, typical Advisor roles are to:

- \* Serve as a mentor for the unit Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteers.
- \* Promote the work of the Key Volunteer Network through a positive attitude and support.
- \* Work with the Key Volunteer Coordinator and/or Key Volunteers resolving difficult challenges as appropriate and as requested.

### 4. The Key Volunteer Coordinator.

A Key Volunteer Coordinator is selected by the CO to provide guidance to and coordinate volunteers who form the Key Volunteer Network. Selection methods for the Coordinator vary among units. Some CO's appointments are based on recommendations; others use an application process. Each CO establishes his/her own selection and screening process. Selection of a Key Volunteer Coordinator is generally based on experience, management and organizational skills. A Key Volunteer Coordinator, like Key Volunteers, must be a spouse of a member of the unit. Duties of a Key Volunteer Coordinator are to:

- \* Keep the CO informed on a regular basis on the state of family readiness in the unit.
- \* Serve as a liaison between the CO and Key Volunteers, and provide feedback to the CO about family concerns.
- \* Work with the FRO regarding family readiness matters.
- \* Coordinate with key command personnel as necessary; e.g., the FRO, XO, SgtMaj, Chaplain, etc.
- \* Develop an effective communications network among unit families; e.g., organize a telephone tree through Key Volunteers and activate it upon the CO's direction or as otherwise needed.
- \* Assist in recruiting eligible volunteers and make recommendations to the CO for appointment to Key Volunteer positions.
- \* Coordinate the training of Key Volunteers with the FSC's Family Readiness Support Program Coordinator.
- \* Communicate to Key Volunteers the responsibilities of their position, informing them about the support available from the unit and the expectations of the CO.
- \* Oversee the development and distribution of a newsletter on a regular basis.
- \* Participate, as appropriate, in the local installation's Family Readiness Support Program Council and work closely with the FSC on training and resource matters.
- \* Work with the Key Volunteer Coordinators from other units temporarily attached to their own unit during deployment.
- \* Perform other Network activities as determined by the CO.

## 5. The Key Volunteer.

The Key Volunteer in the Key Volunteer Network holds a critical position in matching available resources to the needs of families. Her/his performance is directly linked to the quality of life and morale of families within the unit. The Key Volunteer Network provides assistance to families within the unit, giving Marines confidence that family needs and concerns will have the attention of trained and caring Key Volunteers. Key

Volunteers also serve as role models for family readiness and help less experienced families learn to be more self-sufficient.

Selection as a Key Volunteer entails serious responsibilities and the potential for great personal fulfillment. The CO will rely on the Volunteer's judgment, reliability and positive attitude in accomplishing the goals of the Family Readiness Support Program. Complete confidentiality and discretion, as discussed in Section VI, is required of Key Volunteers in their work with Marine families.

The duties of Key Volunteers are to:

- \* Welcome and assist incoming members and families of the unit and ensure they are aware of services available to the "Marine Family."
- \* Participate in a telephone tree as directed by the Key Volunteer Coordinator to ensure a rapid dissemination of information to families.
- \* Maintain a family readiness roster of names, addresses, and telephone numbers for their assigned families and provide changes to the FRO via the Key Volunteer Coordinator.
- \* Provide information to families to refer them to appropriate resources as needed (FSC, Red Cross, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, etc.), and follow up on referrals to ensure the assistance required was obtained.
- \* Provide information and feedback to unit CO's, via the Key Volunteer Coordinator and FRO, regarding family readiness issues.
- \* Offer moral support and assistance to families during times of difficulty and/or crisis.
- \* Assist the Key Volunteer Coordinator with occasional Network activities where unit families can meet each other and form support systems; e.g., videotaping, reunion workshops, etc.
- \* Assist with Key Volunteer Network newsletters by providing input, writing, distributing, etc.
- \* Perform other Network activities as determined by the CO.

The duties of Key Volunteers do not normally include, but can be done at the Key Volunteer's discretion:



- \* babysitting
- \* driving family members on errands, etc.
- \* planning and organizing all the unit's social events (though Key Volunteers may assist in planning as needed).

Obviously there are times when any one of these activities may be the appropriate form of support on a one time basis. Key Volunteers must protect themselves from over-extension and inappropriate expectations of others.

A Key Volunteer may leave the Network at any time, without repercussion. A simple letter of resignation should be submitted to the CO through the Key Volunteer Coordinator.

There are some situations that require a CO to ask for a Key Volunteer's resignation. Breach of confidentiality and failure to perform agreed upon duties in a timely fashion are among the reasons for dismissal.

Personal motivation needs to be examined by the candidate before applying for this important position. Key Volunteers should not expect status or personal favors as the result of their participation in the Network. A genuine desire to help others and commitment to the Marine Corps mission are the best motivation possible.

Key Volunteers are taught in training to become more knowledgeable about family support programs, develop skills in providing referral services, and learn the importance of conveying accurate information. They serve as role models and unit representatives. Reward comes in the form of increased self-confidence, maturity, independence, and personal preparedness to meet the challenges of life in the Marine Corps.

### **C. INTERRELATIONSHIPS**

Key Volunteers interact with a number of individuals and organizations for the Key Volunteer Network to function effectively. The chart on page 13 helps to put these relationships in perspective.

Within a particular unit the exact nature or the description of these relationships may vary. Key Volunteers should note these changes on the chart, especially if it is to be used as part of a turnover job file when an appointment ends.

The military chain of command is a formal one. Although the Key Volunteer Network is not a chain of command, it provides a similar structure to allow for efficient and effective communication throughout the entire Marine Corps community. Volunteers are to use the "chain of communication" within their Network whenever an issue or a conflict needs to be resolved.

#### **D. TRAINING**

Key Volunteer Network training is essential for the effective operation of the program. The purpose of the training is to:

1. Give volunteers an understanding of the Marine Corps organization and structure, the Marine Corps Key Volunteer Network and its relation to the Marine Corps mission.
2. Make volunteers aware of confidentiality, ethical issues and professionalism as a volunteer.
3. Develop communication and listening skills.
4. Develop organizational skills necessary to provide efficient information and referral services.
5. Provide information on local and regional resources.

Headquarters Marine Corps has developed a basic training program for the topics mandated by MCO 1754.2A. This training prepares Key Volunteers to assist families, which in turn supports the unit mission readiness.

An additional benefit from attending training is the attainment of skills that encourage self reliance and develop self-esteem. An ability to help others seek solutions to problems depends on self-confidence and communication skills. For those who have been trained at a previous installation, refresher training provides an opportunity for familiarization with local resources and services. Yearly refresher training serves as an opportunity to conduct cross-training and review lessons learned for new Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers.

Most FSCS offer continuing education courses on topics that help prepare Key Volunteers for more significant leadership positions or enhance their ability to work effectively within the Key Volunteer Network. Unit level training may be conducted to provide unique information, service needs, service availability, etc. Although basic training is standardized throughout the Marine Corps, advanced training topics vary from installation to installation and may include stress management, time management, communications skills, etc.

# KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK: FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS



	<b>COMMANDING OFFICER (CO)</b>	<b>FAMILY READINESS OFFICER (FRO)</b>	<b>KEY VOLUNTEER ADVISOR (Optional)</b>	<b>KEY VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR</b>	<b>KEY VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>FAMILY SERVICE CENTER</b>	<b>UNIT FAMILIES</b>
<b>COMMANDING OFFICER (CO)</b>		Appointed by CO. Military link to family programs. Coordinates unit's Family Readiness efforts.	Selected by CO. Provides advice on family matters based on interaction with Key Volunteer Network.	CO appoints and/or replaces. CO provides all guidance. CO provides resource support.	CO appoints and/or replaces. CO provides primary guidance via Key Volunteer Coordinator. CO provides resource support.	Uses FSC programs as tool to support unit family readiness. Is a referral source for Key Volunteers.	CO uses the Key Volunteer Network to support and communicate with unit families.
<b>FAMILY READINESS OFFICER (FRO)</b>	Appointed by CO. Military link to family programs. Coordinates unit's Family Readiness efforts.		Informal information exchange on Key Volunteer Network and family matters.	Regular meetings to assure information exchange on family matters and to provide assistance as needed.	Informal and generally via the Key Volunteer Coordinator.	Military liaison between unit Key Volunteer Network and the FSC.	Serves as general coordinator for all family readiness initiatives including the Key Volunteer Network.
<b>KEY VOLUNTEER ADVISOR (Optional)</b>	Selected by CO. Provides advice on family matters based on interaction with Key Volunteer Network.	Informal information exchange on Key Volunteer Network and other family matters.		Regular meetings to share information. Mentor	Informal interaction via the Key Volunteer Coordinator.	Informal	Interact as appropriate. At times, at the request of the Key Volunteer Network.
<b>KEY VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR</b>	Appointed by and responsible to CO. Meets regularly for information exchanges on family matters.	Regular meetings to assure information exchange on family matters.	Regular meetings to share information.		Overall coordination of the Key Volunteer Network activities.	Regular interaction with FRSP Coordinator to keep abreast of FSC services.	Interact as appropriate. At times, at the request of the Key Volunteer Network.
<b>KEY VOLUNTEER</b>	Appointed by CO. Interaction via Key Volunteer Coordinator.	Interaction via Key Volunteer Coordinator.	Informal interaction via Key Volunteer Coordinator.	Regular interaction for guidance and general support.		Source for training for Key Volunteers and resource center for families.	Regular interaction.
<b>FAMILY SERVICE CENTER</b>	Provides program services including training for Key Volunteer Network to assist in maintaining unit readiness.	Military liaison between unit Key Volunteer Network and the FSC.	Informal	Regular interaction to schedule training and other support to Key Volunteer Network. Accepts referrals.	Provides Key Volunteer Network training and referral support.		All FSC services in addition to support and assistance to the Key Volunteer Network.
<b>UNIT FAMILIES</b>	Interaction through the chain of command.	Interaction as necessary. At times through the Key Volunteer Network.	Informal	Interaction primarily through the Key Volunteers.	Regular interaction as needed.	All FSC services in addition to support and assistance to the Key Volunteer Network.	

## **SECTION III**

### **GETTING STARTED**

After completion of the basic training, the Key Volunteer will meet with the Key Volunteer Coordinator and other Key Volunteers in the unit. Other initial activities will include:

1. Reviewing those parts of the two major policy documents (MCO 1754.1 and MCO 1754.2A) that guide actions within the Key Volunteer Network.
2. Keeping a record of basic information about each of the assigned families within the unit.
3. Establishing a method for documenting contact with assigned families.
4. Obtaining from the unit Coordinator an information form on service providers in the area or assist in developing one.
5. Keeping a record of the Network's activities and accomplishments. A sample form is provided at appendix A.

#### **A. PERSONNEL AND FUNCTIONS**

Review the interrelationships chart in Section II. The Key Volunteer needs to meet the other members of the Network (FRO, other Key Volunteers) and the Family Readiness Program Support Coordinator (FRSP) at the FSC. If a Key Volunteer has questions about how the Network operates in the unit, she/he should ask the Key Volunteer Coordinator or the FRSP Coordinator to clarify.

The Key Volunteer may need to develop a plan for contacting assigned families, gathering basic information, and determining preferred methods of keeping in touch, if needed.

The sample form at appendix B can serve as a means of developing a profile regarding personnel closely associated with the Key Volunteer Network. The Key Volunteer Coordinator can assist in providing information about or in arranging meetings with personnel such as:

1. The FRO.
2. Other Key Volunteers.
3. The FRSP Coordinator.
4. Other FSC personnel.

## **B. INITIATING CONTACT**

Another aspect of getting started will be the gathering and logging of information about the families assigned to each Key Volunteer. Key Volunteers will be provided a roster of their assigned families' names and phone numbers. Additional information such as the number of children and addresses may be included.

It is imperative that the privacy of Marines and their families be respected by protecting this roster information and using it only in an official Key Volunteer capacity. The unit may collect more personal information by distributing forms at family days or adding to the information when contacts begin with the families. Some families may resist giving personal information until they understand its importance for Key Volunteers' assistance. If resistance is encountered, Key Volunteers should not pressure families for more than the basic information on the roster. Respect for Marine family privacy is critical to Key Network functioning and credibility. Guidelines for obtaining information during "first calls" are outlined in Section IV.

The sample form at appendix C can be adapted to track information in a consistent way for all the families assigned. This basic family information may be maintained on a computer database. Each Key Volunteer, as a part of her/his get acquainted process, is expected to make contact with assigned families.

## **C. THE CONTACT LOG**

The third phase of start up is to develop a procedure for maintaining a log of family contacts, if the unit has not yet developed one. A sample contact log is provided at appendix D.

Try to log all attempts to reach unit families even if it is not successful or a message is left. This log will assist in keeping track of how often contacts are made by Key Volunteers, the issues addressed, or questions asked by the family member contacted.

Treat this form, as with all other notes maintained on unit families, in a confidential and secure manner. Even information that may be considered harmless should be handled in such a way that the Key Volunteer's family members and others do not have access to it. Confidentiality issues are a part of the Key Volunteer training, as is the Privacy Act guidance that applies to serving as a Key Volunteer.

Part of the job as a Key Volunteer is to provide feedback to the CO, through the Key Volunteer Coordinator, on trends or issues that might impact on family readiness. Describing the nature of calls will help form part of the composite support program picture the unit can use to refine its family readiness plans.

#### **D. SERVICE PROVIDERS SUMMARY PROFILE**

A Key Volunteer should maintain a list of service providers in the local area. The sample form at appendix E provides the Key Volunteer a means to development such a reference.

Much of this information is readily available through the local Family Service Center and will be part of the Key Volunteer basic training. It is also a good idea to establish personal contact, especially for those services that will be used regularly. Visiting or calling service providers can provide more complete information for inclusion in the profile. Example: a call to the local Red Cross Chapter may provide added information on services available and establish a point of contact. At large installations, the service providers are contacted by either FSC or senior command (Division/Wing) Key Volunteer Coordinators, and information passed to unit Key Volunteer Coordinators at training, meetings, etc. It would be unrealistic for the Red Cross to field 300 calls from unit Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers.

At small bases or remote locations, nothing replaces personal contact with service providers. When a friendly relationship has been established it is much easier to call with confidence for further help or information. It is strongly recommended that Key Volunteers schedule, whenever possible, get acquainted visits as part of putting together a valuable resource support group for Network families.

#### **E. SERVICE PROVIDERS**

Listed below are resources that are available on or near most installations. A list should be provided to all Key Volunteers by the local FSC during training. If one is unavailable, Key Volunteers should record local points of contact, phone numbers, available services, etc.

- \* American Red Cross.
- \* Career Resource Management Center (part of the Family Service Center).
- \* Chaplain's Office.
- \* Child Development Center(s) - In-Home Care Coordinator #.
- \* Commissary.
- \* Dental Clinic.
- \* Disbursing Office.
- \* Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DODDs).
- \* Education Center.
- \* Exchange.
- \* Family Service Center.
- \* Housing Office - Emergency Repair.
- \* Human Resources Office (formerly known as Civilian Personnel Office).
- \* Legal Assistance Office.
- \* Library.
- \* Medical Treatment Facilities.

- \* Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) - sports, pools, etc.
- \* Post Office.
- \* Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.
- \* Provost Marshall Office (PMO).
- \* Ready Reserve Liaison Office.
- \* Thrift Shop.
- \* Joint Public Affairs Office.
- \* POC when entire unit deployed (assigned FRO, rear detachment or rear party officer).

## **SECTION IV**

### **ROUTINE ACTIVITIES**

#### **A. OVERVIEW**

For members of the Key Volunteer Network, many of the efforts and activities will include interacting with the unit families through the use of the telephone.

This section addresses issues and suggestions relating to these activities.

Most of the contact with families will be routine: to pass information, clarify, or answer basic questions. These contacts are easily handled. Some situations, however, will be unusual.

When serious or unusual issues do arise in dealing with unit families, Key Volunteers must remember that they are not counselors. The primary focus is to help individuals and families by connecting them with existing support systems when needed. A further focus is to help families recognize their capabilities and become self-sufficient.

Basic training helps Key Volunteers learn to avoid "owning the problem" of others and to focus on providing basic information and referral services. Key Volunteers are a major link between the unit families through the Key Volunteer Coordinator to the unit (CO, FRO, SgtMaj, Chaplain, etc.), other resources within the unit, the surrounding community, and other Key Volunteer Networks. The concept of referrals to appropriate resource providers is essential to the Key Volunteer Network's effectiveness.

#### **B. MAKING THE FIRST CONTACT**

The first contact with families will influence future relationships. The Key Volunteer should strive to make first contacts pleasant and at the same time collect the information needed to update rosters and to assist these families in the future. It is helpful if the calls are made when the Key Volunteer is feeling enthusiastic and upbeat. Some guidelines for making this first contact include:

1. The Key Volunteer should state her/his whole name clearly and be prepared to restate the name since this may be the first contact with this family. Example: "Hello, this is Jane Smith, may I speak to ....?"
2. After the Key Volunteer clarifies her/his name and title, the purpose of the call should be stated. Example: "I am a Key Volunteer of H&S Battalion and am calling to acquaint you with our Key Volunteer Network."



3. The Key Volunteer should ask about any previous experience this family has had with the Key Volunteer Network and/or similar programs. Emphasis should be placed on explaining the Network activities such as unit newsletters, information and referral assistance, the Network telephone tree, and available emergency assistance.

4. The Key Volunteer should conduct this first conversation in a manner that will convey a sense of sharing mutual concerns. This will tend to relax the family member and provide a more comfortable lead-in for future calls.

5. If the opportunity is presented, the Key Volunteer should use this time to ask for information to complete the unit Family Contact Sheet.

6. If appropriate, the Key Volunteer should relate any unit news and invite the family members to upcoming events.

7. This first contact should conclude with the Key Volunteer providing her/his telephone number and preferred calling hours for non-emergency phone calls. The Key Volunteer should indicate that the caller is welcomed to contact the Key Volunteer at any time in cases of emergency. Also, convenient times for the Key Volunteer to routinely contact the family should be established.

A few calls may be abrupt or uncomfortable due either to the family member's lack of interest in becoming involved or because of an unfortunate past experience with the Key Volunteer Network or similar program. The Key Volunteer should respect these opinions without feeling personally responsible, and inform the family member who declines to become involved that they will be welcomed as a part of the Network at anytime in the future.

For those families without phones the first contact may be by letter. These individuals may rely on the Network newsletter as a means of obtaining unit-related information, or may arrange to call the Key Volunteer at a time when they have access to a phone.

### **C. RECEIVING CALLS**

To concentrate fully when a family member calls, the Key Volunteer should take a moment to remove distractions, clear her/his mind and take on a professional, non-judgmental attitude. If calls come at a time when life is busy for the Key Volunteer, the Key Volunteer may ask to return the call within a reasonable time, and do so. The caller could also be referred to another source of support. Log each call and describe it briefly, including what referrals were made and when follow-up is needed.

The calls received as a Key Volunteer may typically fall into one of the following six categories:

1. Information Call.

- \* Objective: Provide accurate information
- \* Description: The caller is seeking information about resources, directions, etc. These are generally straightforward questions and should be answered by providing the appropriate information or referral. If the requested information is not readily available, the Key Volunteer may either redirect the caller to the most appropriate referral, such as the Family Service Center, Red Cross, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, etc., giving the telephone number, or offer to obtain further information and contact the caller at a later time.

2. Social Calls.

- \* Objective: Provide a sympathetic ear.
- \* Description: The caller may be lonely or having difficulty adjusting to military life (the Marine Corps, the duty station, a deployment, children, etc.), or perhaps is experiencing feelings of inadequacy. The Key Volunteer should help the caller to clarify the reason for the problem. This caller usually just needs a sympathetic listener. If appropriate, the Key Volunteer should arrange a "phone buddy" for future calls. A phone buddy is another person in the unit who might enjoy longer talks and is a good listener.

3. Settle-the-Argument Calls.

- \* Objective: Listen objectively and refer to the FSC or chaplain, if necessary.
- \* Description: The caller usually has a conflict with someone about something. The Key Volunteer must be firm and fair and not take sides. Do not let the conversation continue for a long time. Once the case has been stated, the Key Volunteer should provide an unbiased summary of the issues to let the caller know that the issues have been understood and ask how the caller will resolve the conflict. Refer serious conflicts to a third party such as the chaplain or an FSC counselor.

4. Complaint Call.

- \* Objective: Determine which service or resource can best resolve the issue and make the appropriate referral.

- \* Description: The caller wants to report the misconduct of an agency or a person. The Key Volunteer writes down the facts and refers the caller to the appropriate resource for resolving or registering the complaint within the unit. Do not get involved in defending anyone or any agency. Often the FRO is the appropriate resource within the unit for handling complaints having to do with other government agencies or facilities.

## 5. Crisis Call.

- \* Objective: Identify the problem, calm the caller, and refer the caller to the appropriate source of help. Follow up within a brief period of time.
- \* Description: The caller has been confronted by a situation or problem which seems emotionally overwhelming (death, rape, suicide, accident, etc.). The Key Volunteer must remember that some callers who have a seemingly ordinary problem may perceive it as a crisis. Sometimes a crisis call may come from a third party or may first appear to be an "information" call as a way to check out the Key Volunteer as a helper. The Key Volunteer must remain calm and unemotional, but sympathetic. The Key Volunteer must provide a sense of stability to the caller. The Key Volunteer should collect the facts by writing them down, be reassuring and help the caller clarify the situation. The caller should be referred to the appropriate resource such as a counselor, social worker at the FSC, the medical treatment facility, etc. In very rare instances, the Key Volunteer may need to call for emergency services to assist the caller. As a follow-up to these incidents, the Key Volunteer should make sure contact was made and help received. (For additional comments on Crisis Intervention see Section IV, F.)

## 6. Rumor Calls.

- \* Objective: Stop rumors from spreading, set the "story" straight.
- \* Description: The caller wants to share rumor or gossip heard. Sometimes he/she wants to tell stories about what someone else is doing. As soon as the Key Volunteer understands the nature of the call, i.e., a possible rumor call, she/he should listen very carefully, especially if the subject of the call is possibly damaging to an individual or to the command. If the Key Volunteer is able to correct the information she/he should do so. If necessary, the Key Volunteer should tell the caller not to call others until the Key Volunteer can check or verify the facts.

If the "facts" are not verified, the Key Volunteer should urge the caller to seek evidence from appropriate sources. In any case, the Key Volunteer should strongly discourage unnecessary passing of questionable information to others no matter what the subject.

#### **D. COMMON PROBLEMS**

Key Volunteers can expect calls concerning a wide variety of problems. It seems that most "common problems" occur while spouses are deployed, although that is not the only time telephone calls will be made about these issues. There are almost always agencies in place that are ready to help with these problems. The unit's FRO will acquaint Marines with both their readiness responsibilities and the resources available to meet family needs. However, problems continue to arise whether or not Marines prepare, and whether or not they deploy.

The following is a list of common calls and some suggested solutions that will aid the Key Volunteer in assisting callers.

##### **1. Allotment Concerns.**

The best solution is to call the FRO. He/she will have access to the Disbursing Office, an appropriate referral resource. If the Marine is deployed, the Key Volunteer Coordinator, FRO, or Rear Party or Rear Detachment Officer may refer the family member to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), Kansas City for more information. Additional assistance may be obtained from the FSC or Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.

##### **2. Car Problems.**

Marines should be advised to maintain records on all car maintenance, repair and part replacement services. Also, each family should maintain their own list of preferred service station(s), automotive dealerships and parts stores. The Key Volunteer should also advise callers to: keep auto repair receipts, call for auto repair estimates or to ask other spouses or friends for comparisons. The Key Volunteer might also suggest that callers check with the installation's service station and auto hobby shop to see if there are any hobbyists in the area who are willing to give a fair estimate for repairs.

##### **3. ID Cards and DEERS (Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System).**

Holding a valid ID card does not always mean DEERS is current. To be eligible for various benefits, the DEERS database must contain current sponsor and family member information. The database is updated when a new Uniformed Services Identification Card is issued at the

Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification System (RAPIDS) office. Should an ID Card expire during a sponsor's deployment, the CMC (MHP-20) will authorize reissuance providing the individual concerned is registered in DEERS. The FRO, Rear Party or Rear Detachment Officer or FSC can assist in making contact.

#### 4. Emotional Problems.

If a caller relates that he or she is seriously distressed or having emotional problems due to deployment separations or the stress of coping with everyday events, the response could be, "Would you like to talk to someone else about this? A counselor or chaplain might be a great help to you." Encourage the person to contact the FSC or chaplain to discuss these feelings further. Give the appropriate referral and phone number and call back to see if contact has been made.

#### 5. Financial Aid.

Some areas to check for possible financial aid would be:

- \* Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.
- \* American Red Cross.
- \* Chaplain (emergencies only).

Depending upon the particular problem, these sources may be able to help. However, if they cannot help with the problem, they should be able to identify further resources that can. The Key Volunteer should become familiar with the policies of these organizations to be certain the problem falls within assistance limits. If unsure, refer the problem to the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society or the FSC.

#### 6. Lonely People.

Suggest that the caller may like to get involved with one of the various clubs, unit sponsored events, community projects or local services, or volunteer services at such places as American Red Cross, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, FSC, etc. Ask other spouses in the unit (whose spouses are also deployed) to call and keep in contact. Make an effort to plan a "networking" event.

#### 7. Deployment Mail.

Check with other spouses whose service member is on the same deployment to see if they are receiving mail. If not, check with the unit to see if there are problems with sending or receiving mail. Remind the spouses that the military member has no control over mail flow.

Recommend that families NOT compare addresses with those from other units, as military addresses are very specific.

8. Rumor Control.

Contact the Key Volunteer Coordinator or the unit's FRO. They should be able to confirm or dispel any rumors about unit activities. Ask callers to question the reliability of "unofficial" information about the unit.

**E. BASIC STEPS FOR HANDLING TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH UPSET CALLERS**

1. Establishing and Maintaining Contact.

- \* Indicate to the caller that he or she did the right thing in calling, and that you will try to help.
- \* Reassure the caller with careful listening and giving the appropriate information.

2. Identifying and Clarifying the Problem.

- \* Identify the appropriate resource agency; information and referral calls are not difficult.
- \* Help to clarify the problem if a person is troubled or in a crisis state. It may be the most helpful thing that can be done.
- \* Clarify the most important issue if several problems are presented.
- \* Help the caller to select the most important issue if the caller is too upset to decide which problem is the most important.
- \* Help the caller to clearly state the problem. This offers reassurance and may perhaps suggest possible solutions.

3. Helping the Caller Identify and Clarify Feelings.

- \* If the caller has confused and contradictory feelings, let the caller know that you are trying to understand how he or she feels and that you are not critical or making judgments.
- \* To help clarify feelings is especially important and may be the only thing that can be done when someone is on the phone who is really upset.

- \* Try to anticipate how a person might feel after the phone call. Assure the caller that another phone call will be welcome. Example: "If you don't feel like talking right now, that's fine. But if you feel like you'd like to talk some more, please call back."
- \* Help the caller develop options and alternatives which may assist the caller in deciding what to do.

Showing an upset person that he or she does have some choices is the best reassurance that can be given. The Key Volunteer can admit that it may be a tough situation, but should also add that there are alternative solutions. If necessary, the Key Volunteer should ask the caller for time to check into some alternatives. It is very important that the Key Volunteer then follow through and get back to the caller as soon as possible. Failure to follow through will have a negative impact on the credibility of the Key Volunteer and the entire Network.

## **F. CRISIS INTERVENTION**

"Crisis" is experienced when things happening to an individual are more than she/he can handle. When events are too great a person experiences crisis. At times a person behaves as if she/he is acting on feelings only. The person is often experiencing a combination of the following emotions:

### **1. Anger.**

Often hidden behind expressions of other feelings. It may be directed at another person or turned inward, resulting in depression. An example would be a caller referring to her/his spouse in a sarcastic way.

### **2. Helplessness.**

Unable to cope, and nowhere to turn. An example would be a caller who says she/he is just not strong enough to be a Marine Corps spouse.

### **3. Anxiety.**

An unreasonable feeling of worry and uncertainty. This is a normal response in challenging situations. Excessive anxiety produces confusion, poor judgment, questionable decisions and self-defeating behavior. At the extreme, it can immobilize a person. As an example, the caller may have just heard her/his spouse will be deploying soon and doesn't think she/he will be able to get all the things done that are necessary before the servicemember leaves.

#### 4. Lowered Self-Esteem.

The person cannot see herself/himself as competent. The caller may, for example, refer to herself/himself as "never having been successful at anything."

Since normal coping ability is challenged in crisis, an individual finds her/his world shaky and uncertain.

Letting people know that their feelings are a normal part of an event rather than proof that they are "disturbed" is helpful. Assure the individual that these feelings, whatever they may be, are OK to have. Refer the caller to professional sources of assistance such as the Chaplain or the FSC. Follow up to make sure the caller did receive the assistance needed.

Other things to remember when dealing with a crisis call:

1. Distinguish between a moderately stressful problem and a crisis state. (Is this situation demanding ALL her/his energy or is she/he functioning fairly well? Do the above characteristics apply?)
2. Calm the caller so that she/he regains some measure of control. The Key Volunteer should remain calmer than the caller. Panic and extreme agitation can be contagious. Be reassuring. Remember that there are many resources at hand. The problem belongs to the caller.
3. If necessary, be more direct and firm without being authoritative. Obtain the essential information if required: address, telephone numbers, etc. In some cases, the decision may be to call for response from professionals through 911.
4. If referrals are appropriate, keep them to a minimum. The caller should take the information, act upon it, and report back if more referrals are needed. Call back; it is critical that the Key Volunteer follow up to be sure the problem is being handled.
5. Be sure that the information given is clear. Having the caller write it down and repeat it gives the caller a chance to get control again since she/he can act upon the information.
6. Focus on the present. If necessary, shift the conversation away from irrelevant material that the caller may wish to discuss. (Example: a spouse may call with a set of problems she/he has with the present deployment and then begin to shift to problems she/he has experienced with past deployments.) In cases such as these the Key Volunteer should tactfully refocus the discussion to the present situation.



7. Do not expect that all calls must end with a referral or an answer. It is helpful just to be there to listen and understand. Let the caller know she or he is not alone and that the feelings are realistic because of the situation. Do not be afraid to take time to think about what to do. Unless the safety of persons or property is at stake, the Key Volunteer can ask to call back in order to have the time to find the appropriate information.

A sense of caring and desire to help will always communicate itself to the individual in need.

#### **G. PASSING INFORMATION FOR THE UNIT**

When a CO wishes to activate the telephone tree, the Key Volunteer Coordinator will contact all Key Volunteers. It is important that the Network be reserved for unit information. It may be tempting but is inappropriate for the Key Volunteer to pass along a personal perspective, opinion or information from other sources.

The Key Volunteer should write down the message given verbatim and repeat it in the same way to each person on her/his list. There should be no speculation about the content. Any guess or comment made becomes part of the "official" message because of the Key Volunteer position. Time is a factor and the Key Volunteer must, therefore, defer questions until all the calls on the list have been completed. However, the Key Volunteer should offer to call back in response to questions or issues raised by the caller.

#### **H. REVIEW OF GOOD LISTENING SKILLS LEARNED IN BASIC TRAINING**

1. STOP TALKING - LISTEN! A person cannot listen if she/he is talking. Polonius (Hamlet): "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice."
2. PUT THE TALKER AT EASE - Help the caller feel that she/he is free to talk. This is often called permissive environment.
3. SHOW HER/HIM THAT YOU WANT TO LISTEN - Act interested. Listen to understand rather than to oppose.
4. REMOVE DISTRACTIONS - Turn radio or TV down low so it cannot be heard by caller.
5. EMPATHIZE - Attempt to walk in the caller's shoes; attempt to feel what the caller feels.
6. BE PATIENT - Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt the caller.
7. HOLD YOUR TEMPER - Do not let anger interfere with listening.

8. DON'T ARGUE AND CRITICIZE - Do not put the caller on the defensive. The caller may "clam up" or get angry. Don't argue; winning can be losing.

9. ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS - Encourage the caller and show that you are listening. It helps to develop points further.

10. STOP TALKING - LISTEN! This is first and last, because all other commandments depend on it. A Key Volunteer can't do a good listening job while she/he is talking. A Key Volunteer listens best when she/he is quiet.

Nature gave people two ears but only one tongue, which is a gentle hint that we should listen more than we talk.

## **SECTION V**

### **OPERATIONAL EVENTS**

#### **A. OVERVIEW**

The life style of the Marine family means separations because of deployments, mobilization, and responses to natural disasters. Whether these family separations are planned or unexpected, the role of the Key Volunteer Network becomes a major factor in the life of the unit. It is strongly recommended that the entire Key Volunteer Network, in conjunction with the Family Readiness Support Program personnel, develop specific action plans rather than waiting for these events to occur and then responding as if in crisis. Keeping the Key Volunteer Network in place all the time provides the framework to be proactive rather than reactive in the face of changing conditions.

#### **B. DEPLOYMENT**

Unit deployments are a fact of life for the Marine Corps. The history of the Key Volunteer Network is grounded in the tradition of "Marines take care of their own." When Marines deployed, families remaining behind have been supported by volunteers who helped others cope with the stress of being alone and responsible for all family matters. With the establishment of the Key Volunteer Network within the Family Readiness Support Program, the tradition of unit family support was institutionalized.

The Network's tempo of activity certainly changes when a unit deploys. Units prepare for deployment by making opportunities available for Marines to handle personal and family matters prior to departure. Key Volunteers may be asked to support family days, pre-deployment briefings or other unit events prior to a deployment. Any contact with unit families can be an opportunity to help prepare them for separation.

When a unit deploys, the composition of the unit changes with the addition of attachments. The attachments become part of the deploying unit, and their families are incorporated into the host unit Network. The host unit Coordinator maintains contact with the Key Volunteer Coordinators of the attachments.

Most units deploying on a regular rotation arrange for Key Volunteers to work with a designated representative (often the FRO) to assist with family problems requiring command attention. Contact with this Marine may be directed through the Key Volunteer Coordinator.

### **C. FAMILY SEPARATION**

Some people who face separation go through some or all of the adjustment stages described below. Awareness of these stages often helps people to better understand and cope with their own emotions. The four familiar stages are:

1. Protest against a spouse's departure usually comes a week or two before he or she is due to leave. Spouses talk of feeling tense, selfish, unbelieving that the other will actually leave, and guilty about not wanting their spouses to go. There is also frustration with the increased hours the Marine spends getting the unit ready to deploy, the awareness of how many household and family business chores must be handled before departure and the physical and mental exhaustion that both husband and wife experience. Children often react to this stressful period by either misbehaving or becoming withdrawn.
2. Despair or depression is the emotional period which may come even before the spouse departs. Depression is often defined as anger turned inward. Unacknowledged anger about the situation can trigger depression and even physical problems. Thoughts like, "I hate the Marine Corps" and "How will I ever live through these next months alone?" are common, but often denied. Some people tend to withdraw from the world to grieve. Feelings of disorganization and sadness are common.
3. Detachment is the level on which people live for most of the separation. It is a state of relative calm and confidence in handling day-to-day living. If a major crisis or event occurs, however, they may tend to revert to the states of despair and protest. Having a baby, for instance, can trigger these feelings.
4. Adjustment to the return can be difficult. Many spouses experience an almost incredible emotional and physical frenzy, getting every inch of the house and themselves ready for the return of the spouse. The Marine arrives from the final days away exhausted and excited to be home. The first days of unwinding can bring long conversations which are attempts to catch up and talk about how the responsibilities of the household will be shared. Finally, the returning Marine spends lots of time sleeping which can be frustrating for the spouse. This can often be the most difficult stage in the cycle, as families reunite, work out accumulated concerns and tensions, and re-establish the rules for living together.

### **D. CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

Accidents and crisis events can happen any time Marines train, whether deployed or in non-deploying units. Word of a mishap will spread quickly among the families, even if the event

occurs far from the area where they live. Television coverage often brings even more information, uncensored and confusing. Families will worry that their loved one is in danger, injured or at risk until they hear specifically to the contrary.

The development of an anticipatory support plan and a definition of a Key Volunteer's individual role during a critical event should be discussed with the Key Volunteer Coordinator. Key Volunteers must know how they will be informed of a crisis, how often information will be updated, where to refer questions, how to handle rumors, and what to do with people in crisis. That role must be clarified before any event occurs.

A rapid response by the Key Volunteer Network can help families cope with a stressful event and prevent some of the confusion and panic caused by misinformation.

#### **E. MOBILIZATION**

The Gulf Crisis in 1990-91 tested Marine Corps systems for incorporating reserves into active duty units during a mobilization of forces. While reserve units will be supported by their own Key Volunteers, members of the Individual Ready Reserves (IRR's) may be attached to any unit. Their families should be added to the roster when that occurs. Usually those families will live away from the installation and have their own personal sources of support. However, like all the families in the unit, they will look to Key Volunteers for information and emotional connection as they cope with their unique set of problems and concerns.

Section VIII of this guide pertains to the operation of the Key Volunteer Network within reserve units.

## **SECTION VI**

### **LEGAL AND OTHER MATTERS**

#### **A. CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is a Key Volunteer's duty and obligation to keep each call and the personal matters discussed during such calls in strictest confidence, within limits set by applicable laws and regulation. A Key Volunteer's first responsibility must be to provide any caller the freedom to discuss matters in a private and safe environment

1. Keeping confidentiality means:

- \* Not disclosing the name or personal information about a caller or call unless authorized by the caller or required by law or regulation.
- \* Passing along general information ONLY with the permission of the caller.
- \* Carefully protecting any written notes pertaining to Key Volunteer calls and keeping them in a secure place.
- \* Informing the caller when she/he is beginning to discuss issues that require disclosure, such as threats to self, others or property.
- \* Resisting the temptation to share irrelevant or inappropriate information regarding other members of the unit, either with callers or members of your own household.
- \* Protecting a caller's privacy when referring to another resource. When a Key Volunteer checks a resource's availability, the identity of the potential client is not disclosed.
- \* Understanding clearly the CO'S policy on what personal family member information will be disclosed to the CO.

2. Though care must be taken when discussing personal or embarrassing information about a case or request for information, the CO must be told anything which may affect unit readiness. This includes but is not limited to:

- \* Circumstances potentially embarrassing to the unit.
- \* Expectation of media coverage regarding a family issue.

- \* A serious crime.
- \* Any case about which the Key Volunteer Coordinator believes the CO should be aware.

Confidentiality is critical to the integrity of the Key Volunteer Network. All contact between members of the Key Volunteer Network and a Marine or a family member will be given special handling to make sure that only persons with "a need to know" learn of any sensitive information. A breach of confidentiality is cause for dismissal as a Key Volunteer per MCO 1754.2A. This must be made clear to family members. The CO of each unit will discuss with the Key Volunteer Coordinator the types of information he/she wishes to know. If a Key Volunteer becomes aware of the situations noted above, she/he must report it to the appropriate agency, or the FSC, and to the CO through the Key Volunteer Coordinator. If the unit is deployed, the CO should designate the appropriate individual to whom reports should be made.

#### **B. FUND-RAISING GUIDANCE**

The Marine Corps Key Volunteer Network is an official organization of the Marine Corps. Network volunteers may not solicit gifts or contributions for Marine Corps organizations or personnel without the secretary of the Navy's authorization. They can accept unsolicited gifts from businesses and persons who independently approach the Key Volunteers with offers of assistance. Gifts which might create an appearance of impropriety should not be accepted.

#### **C. UNIT SUPPORT**

Based on guidance contained in MCO 1754.2A the CO should provide program-essential support at government expense, to include:

- \* Office space, meeting space/facilities, and if necessary, storage space.
- \* Office supplies and access to equipment, to include necessary computer hardware and supporting database management and word processing/desktop publishing software.
- \* Telephone services (including answering machine).
- \* Authorized transportation for official Key Volunteer Network functions.
- \* Use of official mail, for official purposes, provided the mailings carry the return address of the command.

#### **D. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES**

Reimbursement for incidental expenses can be made, if funds are available. Approval for reimbursement should be sought prior to expending personal funds. Reimbursement is never guaranteed. If in doubt, ask the FRO. Reimbursable expenses are limited to:

- \* Child care.
- \* Mileage for privately-owned vehicles when used on official business.
- \* Parking and tolls related to official business.
- \* Telephone toll calls related to official business.
- \* Invitational travel orders.

Installation Commanders may approve non-appropriated fund support for qualified Network activities per paragraph 10608.3 of MCO 1700.27.



## SECTION VII

### MANAGING STRESS AND AVOIDING BURNOUT

#### A. STRESS

Everyone is subject to stress. Those in the helping professions, however, seem to be more susceptible than others. This is because those who get involved tend to do so because they are caring, giving individuals. Sometimes they give so much to those for whom they care, they have little left to give to their families or themselves.

An effective Key Volunteer tries to manage stress. Individuals who get overloaded tend to continue the activities, but may become mechanical and even resentful.

Reaching the point of over-extension doesn't happen overnight. If any of the following symptoms appear, it is time to think about the situation and decide how to best deal with it:

1. Anger and resentment without cause.
2. Discouragement and indifference.
3. Pessimism and overall negativity.
4. Chronic fatigue.
5. Inability to organize and concentrate, sometimes even on routine matters.
6. Procrastinating.
7. Sleep disturbances, too much or too little sleep.
8. Increased marital, social, family conflict, more fights, less companionship and understanding support.
9. Increased use of alcohol and medication.
10. Changes in eating habits.

These symptoms may slowly develop so that it seems normal to feel that way. Refer to the list for a mood check every few months. Also, ask a friend, colleague, or family member to watch for these symptoms.

Be on the lookout for these symptoms among colleagues and the unit families. Become familiar with these stress reactions and help others become aware of them.

## **B. PREVENTION OF BURNOUT OR EXHAUSTION**

There are things that can be done to prevent burnout and to improve a person's general outlook. They include:

1. Do keep track of feelings and health. Get feedback from others, if needed, but do regular check-ups both mentally and physically.
2. Do set boundaries. Be conscientious about time restraints and just how much can be done. Take routine breaks and vacations. Reserve time for yourself and your own family.
3. Do learn to give yourself permission not to be available if exhaustion sets in on some days. There are times when limits should be set on taking calls. Some Volunteers find it useful to have time limits on calls, for example: from 7:00 - 9:00 in the evenings. The Key Volunteer should also let her/his family members know that there are times when the volunteer needs some personal time for "battery recharging."
4. Do not be too hard on yourself. Everyone makes mistakes. Learn from them and keep going and growing.
5. Do have a support system. Be involved with others who understand: other Key Volunteers, military spouses, chaplains, etc. Whether formally or informally, it always helps to share with someone who has done the job before or understands.
6. Do engage in stress reduction techniques. Whether it's physical exercise or mental relaxation techniques, find something that works to relieve stress.
7. Do re-evaluate. If a Key Volunteer is not happy or feels continually over-stressed, something needs to be done. Perhaps it is time to handle the requirements of being a Key Volunteer differently. Perhaps it is time to take a break from being a Key Volunteer.

The Key Volunteer is an integral part of the Family Readiness Support Program in the Marine Corps. The rewards for serving in this role go beyond the knowledge that you are helping others, for it is in the process of helping others that we become more capable ourselves.

In your position as Key Volunteer you will increase your organizational skills, communication skills, learn time management and stress reduction techniques, become more self-assured and self-confident, and gain invaluable experience in dealing with people. These skills are necessary for you as an effective Key Volunteer, and will benefit you long after your appointment as a Key Volunteer has ended.

## SECTION VIII

### RESERVE ISSUES

#### A. THE RESERVE KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK

The experience of Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm as well as Operation Restore Hope illustrated the need for maintaining a continuing reserve Key Volunteer Network. In the midst of emotional and physical upheaval during a mobilization, the responsibility of organizing a vital Key Volunteer Network is extraordinarily difficult. Therefore, to ensure services are available prior to mobilization, a Key Volunteer Network must be established as a normal part of each reserve unit.

Commanding Officers (COs) can support the Key Volunteer Network and Family Readiness Support Program by using the existing directives as well as incorporating family readiness into drill weekends and the training schedule. For example, spouses can be invited to this training, perhaps in conjunction with a Family Day. During this time, issues such as mobilization, finances, benefits, individual responsibilities, LES's, etc. can be discussed. It is important that reserve families understand that finances can abruptly and drastically change, but they are eligible for certain benefits.

#### B. SUGGESTIONS FOR MAINTAINING A RESERVE KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK

1. Make certain that each reserve family has:
  - \* An updated roster of the Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteers.
  - \* Toll-free telephone numbers of the Regional FSCs located at MCB Camp Pendleton and MCCDC Quantico.
  - \* A file containing important family documents and information (marriage certificate, wills, powers of attorney, birth certificates, insurance policies, etc.).
  - \* A copy of "What's Next?" - A Guide to Family Readiness."
2. The CO should:
  - \* Select and appoint a Key Volunteer Coordinator and Key Volunteers.
  - \* Maintain a Key Volunteer Network continuously in peacetime as well as during mobilization.

- \* Provide for Network continuity with a written turnover report from each outgoing Key Volunteer Coordinator.
- \* Provide means for unit newsletters so that Key Volunteers can communicate with families of Marine reservists during the normal work year.
- \* Ensure that the Key Volunteers have current rosters of names, addresses and home phone numbers.

#### **C. TRAINING RESERVE KEY VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS AND KEY VOLUNTEERS**

It is extremely important that reserve Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers receive the same professional training as their counterparts in the active duty forces. While this may be difficult, considering the geographical dispersion of reserve units, it is essential.

Reserve Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers who reside near a major base or station may use the Key Volunteer training program already in place for active duty volunteers. All Key Volunteer Coordinators should receive a copy of the Key Volunteer Network Training Guide. Former Key Volunteer Coordinators and Key Volunteers may serve as mentors for those who are actively involved. Sometimes at small and isolated installations, and at many Reserve Home Training Centers, the Key Volunteer Coordinator may find it necessary to seek related training in her/his community, e.g., Red Cross, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, community colleges, (for continuing education courses such as stress management, time management, communication skills, etc.).

# ACTION PLAN

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